

Galen Ricci
Scarborough
LD 551

Dear esteemed members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to LD 551, which seeks to allow the discharge of firearms on private property within 500 feet of school property under certain circumstances. I believe that this bill poses a significant threat to the safety and well-being of our children and undermines the efforts of law enforcement to maintain a secure environment in and around our schools.

Firstly, it is crucial to consider the opinions of the professionals who are responsible for ensuring public safety. An overwhelming majority of law enforcement officers agree that allowing armed citizens in close proximity to schools would make their jobs considerably harder. The presence of firearms near schools introduces a level of complexity and potential danger that law enforcement personnel are not equipped to manage effectively. Their primary focus should be on maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for our children, and this bill compromises that objective.

Furthermore, the discharge of firearms in close proximity to schools presents an imminent threat to the safety of innocent children. Schools are meant to be sanctuaries of learning, where children can develop and grow without fear or distraction. Allowing firearms within 500 feet of school property, where children are playing and learning, greatly increases the risk of accidents, stray bullets, or intentional harm. The potential consequences of discharging firearms near schools are simply too grave to be taken lightly.

Additionally, the language used in this bill is vague and fails to provide clear guidelines and limitations, which opens a dangerous door for potential tragedies. Ambiguity in firearm regulations can lead to misunderstandings and misuse, putting lives at risk. Without proper delineation of the circumstances and strict criteria for the discharge of firearms near schools, we run the risk of unintended consequences and incidents that could have been prevented with more precise legislation.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the overwhelming evidence that supports the opposition to LD 551. The consensus among law enforcement officers, the potential endangerment of innocent children, and the vagueness of the bill's language all point to the need for a responsible and cautious approach to firearm regulations. Our priority should be the safety and well-being of our children, and this bill undermines that fundamental principle.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I implore you to reject LD 551 and support measures that promote the safety and security of our schools and communities.